The proceeds of Education Cess, credited into Prarambhik Shiksha Kosh (PSK) are utilized exclusively for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and Mid-Day Meal (MDM) scheme.

(c) and (d) Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan, several activities have been undertaken to improve the quality of elementary education, *inter alia*, recruitment of about 7.9 lakh additional teachers to improve the pupil teacher ratio, in-service training of teachers for a period of 20 days each year free distribution of textbooks for primary and upper primary classes to about 6.3 crore SC, ST and girls students, regular academic support to primary and upper primary schools through 6700 Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and 66000 Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) and regular evaluation of students and monitoring of school performance.

Context specific interventions for children who are "hard to reach" such as bridge courses, learning centres with flexible timings, seasonal hostels, home based education, mobile schools, have been taken up under SSA. The Government of India has undertaken 17 orientation and capacity building workshops with States/ UTs with illustrative case studies of good practices, to encourage State/districts to do such context specific interventions.

Under Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), funds are provided for promoting girls education, including free textbooks to all girl children up to elementary level, girls toilets and two focused interventions namely, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya Scheme (KGBV) residential upper primary schools in educationally backward blocks.

National Commission for Higher Education

†2170. SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:
DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a need for a National Commission for Higher Education, for higher education in the country;

(b) if so, Government's reaction thereto;

(c) whether Government have approached the major educational organisations in the country in this matter; and

(d) if so, the names of such organisations and the viewpoints expressed by them?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (d) A proposal to set up a 'National Commission on Higher Education' is under consideration in the light of the observations of various concerned stake-holders.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.